



What's News, Pussycat?



Mrs. Gray

CHECK OUR WEBSITE:

www.catdepot.org

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5933 N. Washington Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34243
941.351.0824

A Sanctuary for Rescued Cats
Fall 2008/Winter 2009

Foreclosure Tails: Wiz



Wiz

The absolute best thing about working at an animal shelter are the animals themselves. We cry when the animals strike out; we cheer when they score. Recently, there were quite a few tears for a cat named "Wiz," who seemed to be getting more than his fair share of strikes against him. But

the tears were nothing compared to the cheers when he made it home.

Wiz first appeared on the doorstep of Cat Depot two years ago, with two other cats and a brief note. He was very quickly adopted out, which is a testament to his wonderful personality, as people often don't notice black cats in a shelter environment.

Wiz adapted well to life in his new home. Then, over a year later, through no fault of his own, Wiz came back to Cat Depot. The problem? His new family's home had gone into foreclosure.

Following is an excerpt from an email Wiz's family sent the shelter, after having to return him:

Last week my husband brought our beloved cat back to Cat Depot. When we first adopted him he was known as Wiz, and you had a note from his prior mommy that told us a bit about him. I was crying way too much to write a proper note last week. The tears are still here, but I want you to know more about him with the hopes this will aid in finding him a new home.

We called him Shadow, and he always came running when called! He lived with another kitty with us as he did before and is great (although shy at first) with other cats. He was allowed on the lanai and willingly came in when called. No medical problems and he had all of his check ups.

Although he may be awfully scared at your facility, I guarantee that you will see a completely different cat in your home. Please, somebody, take him into your home. You won't regret it.

Wiz's family called the shelter every other day to check and see if he had been adopted. This was a tense time for both them and the Cat Depot staff, because we could all tell that his family truly loved Wiz, yet they had no choice but to give him up.

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Koshi's Story

I was born in 2005 in New Orleans and life was good, living with my loving parents and my two playful brothers. In August of that year, I was still a young kitten, and I remember feeling very frightened when an enormous storm hit New Orleans. Like many other residents, my parents grabbed a few precious belongings, put my brothers and me in carriers, and quickly left town. I heard my mom calling her Aunt Sue who lived in Sarasota and telling her that Hurricane Katrina was headed right for us.

Prior to our arrival in Sarasota, we learned that Aunt Sue had rented us an apartment and had even paid for the pet deposit. Our new landlord greeted us, but not being a cat lover, he only allowed us to stay for one day. Wanting to keep us safe and feeling like they had no other alternatives, my parents brought my brothers and me to a place called Cat Depot.

After making sure that my brothers and I were well cared for at Cat Depot, I saw my dad cry for the first time ever. He promised to visit us every weekend until he could find us another place to live.

He kept his word and visited many times. One weekend, however, he informed us he was unable to find work, that he and mom would have to move up north, and that they could not take us with them. He assured us that Cat Depot would find us all good homes. Hurricane Katrina had changed our lives forever.

A few weeks later, my two brothers were adopted, and I was left behind. I overheard my caregiver say that the reason I had not been chosen was because I was the only black cat in the litter. I understand that some people have a false belief that black cats bring bad luck. That could not be further from the truth, because whoever adopts me will be a very lucky person; I am an extremely friendly cat that loves to sit on people's laps and be stroked and cuddled.

I adjusted to life at Cat Depot and made new cat and people friends very easily. One day, however, my ear began hurting, and I scratched it a lot until one of my caregivers noticed. Cat Depot immediately sent me to the doctor. I heard him say I had an ear



Koshi

Continued on page 4, See Koshi



Inside Scoop

I believe that making a difference in life, leaving behind a legacy, no matter how large or small, is something we all hope to achieve. I've always dreamed of a place where it was understood that animals have feelings, where each and every one of them is respected for their inherent value, and all are treated with as much care, dignity, and love as are our fellow men or women. Five years ago this September, thanks to our dedicated staff and the help and long hours of our volunteers and founders, such an environment was created: Cat Depot.

So, what has Cat Depot accomplished in these first five years?

- We've helped over 2,700 cats and kittens total. Of these, the vast majority have been rescues or relinquishments to our shelter.



Scott Brown
& Gretchen

- Of the 2,700, we have housed 2,100+ in our shelter, caring for their wellbeing on an individual basis. Over 1,700 of these have been placed into good homes.

• Another 400 or so felines belonged to families that were themselves in crisis. The families did not wish to give up their cats, but needed help in keeping them. Whether it was food or medical care, part of Cat Depot's mission is to help cats stay with families, whatever it takes.

- There have also been approximately 200 instances where we provided financial support to people who wished to spay or neuter cats—their own or strays—but could neither afford the surgeries nor meet the strict low-income guidelines necessary for other forms of assistance. Without the help of Cat Depot, these are cats that would have contributed to the tragic cycle of feline overpopulation.

None of this would have been possible, however, without the help of our adopters and our donors. **Thank you.**

It's time to also recognize the generous sponsors, contributors, and guests who helped to make our **2008 Cat'sino Night** event a big

success. With their assistance, we raised \$60,000 to support Cat Depot's ongoing care of homeless felines. In addition, huge "kudos" to all the volunteers whose participation helped make the event another fun and memorable evening. Coming up: our glamorous **2009 Cat'sino Royale black-tie gala** scheduled for **February 28 at the Sarasota Sailor Circus**. This will be a don't-miss experience!



Bailey Jeter & Dakota

Our front-page feline stories (by **Marilyn Warner**) have been a big hit, so we've included two this time, on **Wiz** and **Koshi**. Both address how easily and quickly pets become

victims of both financial and environmental crises. Foreclosure of homes has become a major issue for pet owners, while hurricanes separate and often dissipate loving homes in a matter of minutes.

Cat Depot would like to extend a special thanks to **Timothy Agnew**, an excellent kinesiologist here in Sarasota (who runs his own clinic), who is also a recognized and published short story author. We are so pleased to include in this newsletter his beautifully written article called **Ode to a Cat**. It is a testimony to a cat's ability to bond with and protect their loved one, while providing truly therapeutic benefits.

As always, **Dot Cat** is back. This time he shows us how different similar-seeming cats can be, as he helps us understand why the success of an adoption really depends on how good the match is between an adopter and the new pet. Our adoption staff works hard to find the best fit between an adopter's household (other pets? little kids? long hours?) and their new feline friend.

On the home front, Cat Depot is pleased to welcome **Carolyn Nassif**, our new assistant manager. She is a long-time veterinary technician who specializes in cats. In addition to her



Shirley Martin & Bailey

Continued on page 6, See Inside Scoop



Newsletter

Linda Slavin, Editor
Donna Thomas, Asst. Editor
Marilyn Warner, Photography

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Donna Fettes
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Carolyn Nassif
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Wendy Samuels
Cathleen Stoye
Kathleen Stratton
Donna Thomas
Marilyn Warner
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Who We Are

Cat Depot is the largest feline animal shelter in Sarasota, Florida. Since opening to the public in 2004, we have housed and/or cared for over 2,700 cats, finding homes for over 1,700. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization.

Cat Depot is a no-kill facility that gives individualized care for cats until they are adopted. We provide large free-roaming enclosures for many of the cats in our care and help protect the rights of abused animals.

Our mission is to provide shelter for homeless cats until good homes are found for them and to reduce the need to shelter homeless cats by educating and supporting the public in matters of feline care and behavior.

We welcome you to visit our adoption center. Cat Depot is open to the public 6 days a week (closed Tuesdays) from 11am to 4pm.

Cat Depot
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Sarasota, FL 34243
941.351.0824
info@catdepot.org
www.catdepot.org
Visit our website
to see our cats on Petfinder!

\$15,000 Grant Is a Big Win for the Cats!



Cat Depot has received a \$15,000 grant from the Florida Animal Friend spay/neuter license plate program. The one-year grant will allow us to expand our current program of

providing feline spays or neuters to underserved segments of the community.

Typically, free spays or neuters are awarded through various organizations to people who trap feral cats or who meet stringent low-income guidelines. "We help those folks as much as we can," says Shelter Manager Marilyn Warner, "but there are many others who need assistance but who fall through the cracks in the system. It could be due to language barriers, earning just a tiny bit too much income, whatever. This grant will help us make a real difference for those folks, too. They want to do the right thing, but just can't afford the surgery."

Ms. Warner, who wrote and was awarded the grant, suggested that interested parties should contact the shelter by phone. "If you've been wondering about whether you should fix your cat, the answer is yes. Spayed and neutered cats are both better behaved and healthier. And, most importantly, you won't be contributing to the tragedy of feline overpopulation."

According to the website of the granting agency, Florida Animal Friend, Inc., every year in Florida approximately 800,000 cats and dogs are killed due to overpopulation. According to Cat Depot Executive Director Donna Thomas, the majority of these are cats. "National and regional surveys have repeatedly shown both that more cats are relinquished to shelters than dogs and that more cats are euthanized due to overpopulation than dogs."

Florida Animal Friend license plates can be purchased at any local DMV office. The cost of the plate is that of a standard plate or renewal plus \$25. For more info see www.floridaanimalfriend.org

Making a bequest is a powerful act for positive change

Not-for-profit organizations such as Cat Depot receive many of their most significant contributions in the form of bequests. We are deeply grateful to those caring individuals who, through their will or living trust, make a gift to support our work over the years to come. Please consult your tax advisor for assistance in establishing a legacy that will reflect your concern for felines now and into the future. For purposes of bequests, our name and address as recorded on our articles of incorporation are: Cat Depot, Incorporated, 3311 Bayou Sound, Longboat Key, Florida, 34228.

Angel Fund = Compassion in Action

It's a sad fact that Cat Depot is often in the position of rescuing cats and kittens who are in need of special medical care. These cats may come to us with injuries or ailments that require extensive long-term medication or surgeries. Orphaned kittens also often need special kitten formula as well as extra care and treatment.

The expenses associated with treating some of these cats may be very high. General donations to our organization are used to defray the operating expenses of our shelter: the basic necessities for the cats and the salaries for the staff who care for them. However, treating a single injured or sick cat may cost hundreds of dollars or more.

Money received in adoption fees does not cover these extra expenses (nor does it cover the full cost of the spay/neuter, testing, microchip, and vaccinations that we provide with each cat). To help cover these extra expenses, we have set up the Cat Depot Angel Fund. Our goal is simple—to be able to ensure that when a quality life is possible, the expense of necessary medical care does not stand in the way of giving each and every feline a chance for a happy ending.

Through the support of caring individuals who want to make a difference, we hope to create a situation in which no adoptable cat is denied a chance at a quality life due to medical expenses. Please help us meet this goal—your support in any amount is greatly appreciated. Donations are accepted online, by phone, in person, or by mail via the donation envelope enclosed in this newsletter. Thank you!

Coming Soon! November 15th, Fall Adoptathon

Have you seen these faces?



Cowboy Chad



Cowboy Greg



Cowboy Lyndon

Our rough and ready felines are back, along with adoption specials, prizes, complimentary food and beverages, and more!

Visit Cat Depot on November 15th from 10am to 4pm for our Fall adoptathon...

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: THE SEQUEL!

Homeward Bound Adoptathon Sends Home a Baker's Dozen

A grand time was had by all at our May adoptathon, with 13 cats finding forever homes. Our thanks to WWSB ABC 7 for their coverage of the event and to all our volunteers (especially our VIPs Mellonie Smicklas and Brinton Smith and the crew from Best Buy) for helping create such a fun experience!

Cat'sino 2009 - SAVE THE DATE



It's 1960—welcome to the Monte Carlo Casino.

The cars of the Monaco Grand Prix purr nearby.

Make like James Bond and eat, drink, and gamble in high style.

Or maybe enjoy a little of Octopussy's circus.

Join us under the big top and see...

Cat'sino Royale • Saturday, February 28, 6:30pm
PAL Sailor Circus, Sarasota

For sponsor information or to receive an invitation, contact:
info@catdepot.org or 941.351.0824.

Cat'sino 2008 Hits the Jackpot!

The ambiance was MGM Grand Las Vegas. The lights were dimmed, the dice ready to roll, blackjack dealers in place, as the second annual Cat Depot Cat'sino Night event began. Two hundred twenty gambling enthusiasts were ready to go for broke... for the kitties, of course!

In the foyer a vast array of silent auction items caused quite a stir. You could choose anything from a day at the spa to a trip anywhere in the world. Twelve lucky raffle ticket holders also won gift baskets, with the chocolate and wine baskets being the most desired.

The cuisine was superb, and trips to the open bar made this event a real "deal." Best of all, Cat'sino 2008 raised over \$60,000 for our furry friends, a remarkable 20% increase in our gross receipts from 2007.

We'd like to thank our sponsors and request that you support them with your patronage:

Top Cats

Josephine Cunningham
Arthur C. Murray Charitable Foundation

Hip Cats

Bank of America
DeLieto & Associates of Michael Saunders & Co.
Herald-Tribune Media Group
Livingston, Patterson, Strickland and Siegel, P.A.
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Cool Cats

Christo, Inc., Underground Utility Contractor
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Kitty Cats

Bank United
Daiquiri Deck
Judith-Ann Ragona
Levin Tannenbaum
Mellonie & Brinton
Micah Parker Artworks, Inc.
OASIS

Wiz

Continued from page 1

Finally, after a little over two months, we were able to let them know the good news: Wiz had been adopted into what promised to be a truly forever home.



Wiz scored a home run, but not all "foreclosure" pets even get a chance at bat. Some may actually be left inside abandoned homes. Others, especially cats, are frequently turned out to fend for themselves. Families may think they are doing their cat a favor by not taking it to a shelter, but the result is usually malnourishment, disease, or injury. At best, releasing a cat to the streets results in a perpetuation of the cycle of homeless and unwanted feral and semi-feral felines.

In the face of foreclosure, keeping furry and human families together is always the best choice, and using the internet can make finding a pet-friendly rental easier. But, if you know of someone for whom that's not possible, please encourage them to contact their friends, relatives, and local animal shelter. Knowing where their pet is—and that it is being treated humanely—is one way to turn an "L" to a "W" in the final column of the score board. Just ask Wiz.

Useful Links:

PeopleWithPets.com helps you search for rental housing or hotel accommodations throughout the U.S: <http://peoplewithpets.com/>

DogHouseProperties.com is a former sub-prime lender (!) who now compiles pet-friendly housing information: <http://www.doghousproperties.com/>

The Humane Society of the U.S. presents steps to help in the search for pet-friendly rentals: http://www.hsus.org/press_and_publications/press_releases/foreclosure_victims_urged_to_remember_pets_010708.html

Koshi

Continued from page 1



Koshi

polyp, and I would need an operation, which resulted in me losing the hearing in one of my ears.

Although my caregivers joke that I now have selective hearing, I have recovered from my surgery without a hitch, I am feeling great, and I don't need any special care. I've been at Cat Depot for three years, which in cat years equals forever.

So, if you happen to be in the neighborhood, please look for me, my name is Koshi, and I am a survivor of Hurricane Katrina.

If you can find it in your heart to love a super sweet black kitty, or to help us defray the cost of Koshi's surgery (\$1000+) with a contribution to our Angel Fund, please contact Cat Depot today at 941-351-0824 or email info@catdepot.org. Also, if you click through to Petfinder from our website, www.catdepot.org, you can see a video of Koshi in action!

Dear Dot Cat



For those of you who are not familiar with my column, I'm Dot Cat, a former feline alumni of Cat Depot and their roving reporter. My job is to provide a voice for all the stray and relinquished cats rescued by Cat Depot, and our cats ALWAYS have lots to say.

Cats, like people, are social, but of late I've been concerned that my single parent mom wasn't socializing enough. So, I was pleasantly surprised when she read me an ad she had placed on an online dating service. What a concept! Always looking to help increase Cat Depot's adoptions, it occurred to me that maybe I could assist some of our eligible felines compose purrrsonal ads for this newsletter.

Meeting with the foxy felines listed below confirmed for me that cats, like people, all have different and truly unique purrrsonalities. Keep in mind, too, that looks can be deceiving, especially for cats that look very similar. For example, both Charles and Brody (below) are black male cats but their purrrsonalities couldn't be more different! Read on and see...

Charles – A Hurricane's Gift



If you want a soul mate that takes life easy, likes to listen rather than talk, and is oh, so affectionate, I'm your guy. In 2005, I blew into Cat Depot on the coattails of Hurricane Charley, hence my name. I am a black DSH (domestic shorthair) cat that's four years young. I'm relaxed, so a home with children, other cats, or a dog is even okay, if we're introduced politely. If you're looking for a long-term relationship with a smooth yet sincere partner, ask for me.

Brody – Likes a Slow Hand



Do you like your men with long dark hair, soft and plush, perfect for caressing on those quiet nights alone together? Do you enjoy basking in the moonlight while sharing a jumbo shrimp cocktail? I'm not an easy pickup, but I will be true blue if you take it slow. I have been hanging out at Cat Depot for a couple of years now, and it's high time I had my own pad. Have your people call my people at Cat Depot and ask for Brody.

Next we have my favorites, the ladies! Below you will meet Patches and Cuddles. Other than being colorful females, they have little else in common. Each has a different life story, different personality, different likes and dislikes, but that's what makes them so darn appealing.

Cuddles – The Name Says It All



Sultry yet sweet, tortoiseshell female in her prime, a little shy on first dates, but open to light petting. Recent loss of a previous home and loved one to hospice, so is attending grief workshop. Friendly, affectionate looker, anxious to find stable home to spend entire 9 lives. Like name implies, snuggling is my M.O. and is a must. Come up and see me sometime.

Patches – A Wealth of Wisdom



Mature, experienced female seeking kind and patient lifetime companion. I like gentle touches, but not being held, due to my difficult start. I was one of the 262 cats that Cat Depot rescued when it first opened. I am working on my intimacy issues, but I could use your help. I'm looking for a home where I can retire and start over. I don't need much, but I'll appreciate whatever you can give. To find me, look for the "dilute" (light colored) tortoiseshell lady with short hair.

Many folks visit our shelter in search of a particular breed of cat, and we have them all: pure breeds, mixed breeds, Himalayan, Maine Coon, Burmese, you name it! Although certain breeds are known for their unique traits, adopters should also know that each cat also has their own purrrsonality, as well. So, remember not to judge a feline by its genes alone!

Snowball – Mr. Blue Eyes



A handsome, muscular, and loving 2-year-old Siamese cross is how I'm often described. I greet others by giving a big "high five," and I'm very playful, athletic and adventurous. I'm very sociable with humans, but I like to be "King Pin" and wouldn't be happy sharing my space or litter box. Make sure you save some quality time for me each day so we can bond, play ball and watch sports while sharing the remote. Ask for Snowball, Cat Depot's blue-blooded jock.

Holly – A Refined Dreamer



They say I am a Turkish Angora mix, a regal and refined breed. We are smart, loyal, and graceful. I am less than a year old, and I warm up nicely when stroked or brushed. I miss my siblings and love to play, so a home with other kittens or young adult cats would be lovely. Dogs and children must be on best behavior if they want to gain my trust, however. I take ballet and am looking for a dance partner who will treat me like a princess.

So there you have it...six of Cat Depot's eligible felines! There are lots more to choose from, 175+, so come on down to the Depot, in person, and check them out. If you'd rather look from the comfort of your home, go to our web site (www.catdepot.org) and click on the "Petfinder" link at the top of each page. I think all of my feline friends will agree, home is where the heart is... but on a lighter note, it's also a great place to scratch what itches!

DOTCAT

Did you know that October 29th is National Cat Day?

From www.nationalcatday.org/about.htm:

Please visit your local shelter on October 29th and offer love and life by adopting a homeless cat. The goal of National Cat Day is to facilitate the adoption of 10,000 shelter cats nationwide on that day. Estimates reveal that approximately 4 million cats enter shelters every year, with 1-2 million being euthanized.

Even if you can't adopt a cat, you can offer to volunteer to play with a cat for a while. Who knows? You may just fall in love!

Editor's Note: We agree!



Would you like to keep receiving Cat Depot's "What's News, Pussycat?" newsletter? Drop us a line at info@catdepot.org or call 941.351.0824 and let us know! If you'd like to receive the newsletter by email (and save the cats some money), we can do that, too!



Inside Scoop

Continued from page 2

employment at a well-respected feline-only veterinary practice in Sarasota, Carolyn also ran her own business providing at-home care for cats, and was a former vet tech at the ASPCA in New York.

Another big step forward—thanks to volunteer **Madeline Young**, many of our adoptable cats on Petfinder now have videos that show them in action! Please go to our website, www.catdepot.org, and click on the Petfinder link at the top of each page to see them.

Finally, fundraising is a perpetual task for all non-profits, and Cat Depot is no different. With this newsletter we introduce our **Angel Fund** and ask for our readers' support. Please take a minute to read about this worthy endeavor, and support it if you can.

As one of Cat Depot's founders, I've seen the recognition and respect for our cause grow and expand in the five years since we began. Over time, we have become a vital, instrumental, and much-needed component in Florida's animal welfare community. Yes, we continue to work hard to fulfill the daily needs of the cats in our care, but your contributions have made a big difference, too. We thank you for helping us to build a legacy for future generations and to share in giving the respect and dignity we owe our feline friends.

Thank you,
Linda Slavin, Editor

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world. ~Anne Frank

Cat Updates!

Forty-five cats were pictured in our Winter '08 issue. Of those, we are proud to say that 31 (or 69%) have since been adopted!



Pippin

An update on Pippin, our Winter '08 cover cat: In the Spring, Pippin was observed to not be eating well. After being examined, he was treated for dental issues, culminating with a full mouth extraction. Happily, shortly afterward, Pippin was once again eating well, and his demeanor was good. **Do you have room for this sweetie in your life?** Pippin was 10 days

old on 10/5/04 when he first arrived at Cat Depot. He was adopted out, then returned, due to his owner having financial issues. He is a charmer, a little shy but very inquisitive, and loves to explore.

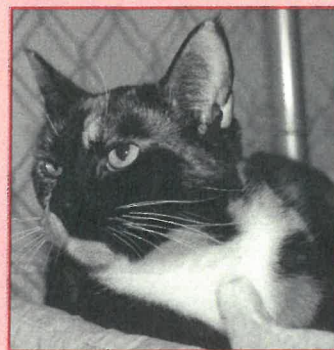
And how are the cats doing from last issue's Cat Updates? The really good news is that Frederick, the blind cat featured on our Fall '07 cover, was adopted. The lady who adopted him has let us know that Frederick lets her pick him up and hold him, unlike when he resided in the shelter. He also gets up on the bed and sleeps with her! Retired police officer Jeffrey Putnam adopted Frederick's brother, Parrot. Also adopted after originally being featured in our Fall '07 newsletter were Nora and Sadie.



Jeffrey Putman & Parrot

Kaprice and Patches are the only others featured in the Fall '07 newsletter who remain at the shelter. Kaprice is a young and happy shorthair calico, and, for more on Patches, see Dot Cat's article in this issue.

Congratulations to the new families of Keeley, Benson, Ashta, Alleiha, Audan, Big Boy, Bettina, Phoebe, Sophie, Reese, Buzz, Burgandy, Blithe, Shrimp, Darcy, Jordan, Saya, Honeybun, Jayla, Kringle, Lillie, Shelby, Martini, Mopsy, Pandora, Sensei, and all five G Kids. And, a high five to the many others whose pictures were not shown, but who have found forever homes over the last six months. Have a wonderful life!



Kaprice



Buddy

ODE TO A CAT

*Thy gentle mew-and tell me all thy frays
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick:
Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrists*

- John Keats



Lilly

When I first saw her, she was curled up into a ball in a computer cubicle, her small head tucked into her stomach, her chin turned up toward the ceiling in a satisfactory grin. Out cold. She resembled a white, fluffy balloon a child might have blown up, her small paws barely visible on the well fed girth of her body. We had not yet met, and at first it was as though she didn't care if we ever did. There was sleeping to do.

My patient, Harriet, is a 70-year-old stroke victim who cannot speak (though at times she does get a word out), and who is bed ridden and fed by a tube. It is my job to move her joints twice a week, to make certain she does not develop blood clots, and occasionally get her to smile. I usually accomplish this by reminding her that I am taller than Chuck Norris, her matinee heartthrob. I call her "Hula," because Harriet grew up in Hawaii and used to be a hula dancer on the island of Maui.

The second day I arrived for Hula's treatment, Cat, as I called her at first since I did not know her name, was again curled up in the cubicle. As I stepped in the room she raised her white head and looked at me. "Hello Cat," I said. She covered her head in her paws and went back to sleep.

The next week, I found Cat seated at the window, carefully eyeing a gecko crawling up the screen. When she saw me, she leaped upon the bed, walked over to me, and ran her fluffy head against my arm. "Hello Cat," I said. As I began my physical therapy treatment, Cat went and sat by Hula's pillow and stared at me, as if to say, "Okay. Show me what you can do to help her."

After two years this is our routine: Cat waits for me to arrive, leaps upon the bed, brushes me with her head, then stands guard as I do my work. Occasionally she leaves her post to position herself in such a way that I cannot continue my exercises with Hula. Cat turns on her back, wedged underneath my arm and Hula's leg. If I continue to move her leg, Cat swats me with her paws. At first I mistakenly read this behavior as Cat trying to interest me in playing with her, so I picked



Gustav



Bizmark



Melvin

up a toy and threw it. But Cat embraced my forearm with both paws, in a sort of "cat hug," and looked at me upside down as though I were a fool. "You want me to chase that?" I imagined her thinking. Not to disappoint me, she hopped up and began chasing her tail, madly swiping at it with her paws. She ceases only when she realized (again) that the tail is attached to her body and it cannot be clawed or bitten.

Hula's first perception of my attention to Cat was amusing. While she cannot talk to me, I've learned to read her face and her eyes. When she pouts, she casts her eyes up with her head tilted away from me and stubbornly refuses my directions. I knew she was faking it, but I played along. "What," I said, "Am I not paying much attention to you?" She ignored me. I waited a beat. "But I am taller than Chuck Norris. That's something." I hear the air escape Hula's lungs in spasm and I had her laughing. Cat seemed to agree as she proudly moved to sit on Hula's chest.

I read once that the Egyptians were the first people to keep cats as pets, and that they also worshipped them as Gods. Yet cats also have a long history of being therapeutic animals. Not only can they sense illness and even death, they seem to understand the human condition. They seem to know when touch is needed. Cat is Hula's muse, her guardian and her protector. Cat's posturing when I arrive is about more than play or attention; Cat is observing me and making certain, I believe, that Hula is alright, and that somehow I am doing my part to make her life easier.

Weekly, as I slowly open Hula's contracted hand so I can hold it before I leave for the day, Cat is seated at her pillow, watching me.

Unless, of course, a gecko has her undivided attention.

Timothy Agnew is a Sarasota kinesiologist and writer. He just completed a textbook for McGraw Hill to be published in 2010. He can be reached at intent@stretchme.com.

Feline Evacuees from Hurricane Gustav Brought to Cat Depot



Paula

Cat Depot recently took in 11 cats (many of which are pictured on this page) evacuated from the Humane Society of South Mississippi, in Gulfport. The Humane Society of South Mississippi had previously been overwhelmed by the enormous impact of Hurricane Katrina, with the shelter experiencing complete devastation. The shelter was taking no chances with Hurricane

Gustav. They used their detailed disaster plan, developed in the wake of Katrina, to disseminate the animals at their facility to locations outside the state before the hurricane struck.

Cat Depot is looking for good homes for the evacuated cats—all of whom are under 1 year old—and donors to help support the cost of their care.



Rick

Cats Around Town

Cat Depot presents a monthly one-hour program on cat care and ownership at the Suncoast Center for Independent Living in Sarasota. Call 941.351.9545 for more information on our next session and the Center's many terrific programs that help people with disabilities live independently and participate fully in society.

Emilie Monlouis and friend; photo courtesy Mary Morris, SCIL



Our Hearts ♥ Cats

Research presented at the 2008 International Stroke Conference suggests cat ownership may contribute to cardiovascular health.

The study compared cat owners with non-cat owners and found that *people who had never had a cat were 40% more likely to die of a heart attack over the 20-year study period.* They were also 30% more likely to die of any cardiovascular disease, including stroke, heart failure, and chronic heart disease. The results held true even after taking into account other risk factors including age, smoking, blood pressure, and gender. Researchers did not find similar cardiovascular benefits for dog owners, however.

Many questions remain about the source of cat ownership's positive effects, but, in the meantime, non-cat owners might consider making friends with a feline or two, just in case.

Help Wanted: Even More Volunteers!

Cat Depot still (and always) needs volunteers for "cat cuddling" and socializing, but we're also seeking the assistance of educators and folks with communications experience to help with our outreach events. If this sounds like fun, gives us a call, email, or drop on by. We appreciate your help!



Bacon



Abileen



Baby Ruth



Hugs



Kukla



Bellow



Samantha



Tylo

🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 **We Need Homes** 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾



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